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SOURCE Neue Zuercher Zeitung.MODIFY USSR ECONOMIC POLICY IN AUSTRIA

In an article on Soviet economic policy in Austria, the Vienna correspondent of the Swiss newspaper, Neue Zuercher Zeitung, points out that certain conclusions can be drawn concerning the broad political line of the USSR vis-a-vis Vienna and Central Europe from the way in which the USSR enterprises in Austria are being operated.

It is open to speculation how much the Austrian government actually knows about those industrial and agricultural enterprises which are considered German property by the Soviet element, and which are responsible for nearly one-sixth of the country's total production. The USIA (Administration of Soviet Properties in Austria) and the petroleum refineries, SMW and SEB keep both the volume and commercial use of their output a closely guarded secret.

A study of prewar conditions, however, will furnish certain clues. Thus, it is known that the Akku Plant in Liesing, a suburb of Vienna, used to supply 67 percent of the total anode battery production, that the Elin Works in Inzersdorf were 100-percent responsible for the production of rectifiers, that the Boehler Works in Ybstal furnished 60 percent of the tool steel and steel rods output, and the Schmidt Foundries in Krems produced 50 percent of the thin plate.

In the light of current figures now available, these data can be corrected and brought up to date. For, while Soviet enterprises pay no sales or other taxes, they provide their workers with the customary health and compensation insurance benefits, using Austrian institutions. Incidentally, these latter organizations complain bitterly that the Russians are constantly in arrears with their remittances.

As a result of this social insurance coverage of USIA workers, the number of persons employed in these enterprises is known at all times, and it is possible to base production estimates on these figures when coupled with other pertinent details.

- 1 - **CONFIDENTIAL**

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Some of the USIA enterprises are so closely connected with Austrian plants that indications of comparative work intensity frequently appear. The Siemens Schuckert enterprise in Vienna, for instance, is composed of several plants and one central administration. The plants, located in the Soviet Sector, are part of the USIA complex, while the central executive offices, located outside the Soviet Sector, are independent. The central office, however, continues to give orders to the sovietized plants and to direct their business.

Finding a basis for estimating the output of oil wells and refineries is a far more difficult problem. It is believed that the oil wells are at present being overexploited about 40 percent. A 10-20 percent retrogression in yield has already been noted. Current production is assumed to be about 850,000 tons, while 900,000 tons were produced in 1949.

During the past year, USIA policy has undergone a noticeable change. Not only has dismantling been discontinued but new investments have been made, particularly in the building branch. At the same time, it has become apparent that USIA products, which until a little over a year ago were largely sold to Western countries to ease the foreign-exchange problem of the satellites, are now largely diverted to the Eastern States. It is rumored that Tikhomorov, chief of the Soviet enterprises in Austria, has orders from Karlshorst to intensify the economic consolidation of Eastern Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

It is also noteworthy that the USIA personnel policy underwent decided changes last spring. The conciliatory attitude adopted at one time toward former members of the National Socialist Party ceased abruptly. Mass dismissals are taking place in all Soviet controlled plants and vacancies are filled with members of the KPÖe (Austrian Communist Party). Many of the non-Communist USIA workers anticipated dismissal by quitting their jobs, knowing that in case of disasters such as the fire in the leather factory of Stadlau near Vienna suspicion of sabotage and recriminations would be first directed against workers who are not members of the KPÖe.

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- 2 -

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